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ABSTRACT

The first year of The National Right to Read Effort, which was proposed as a coordinated endeavor to make it possible for all students to attain the skills and desire necessary to read to the limits of their capability, was a year of planning. The National Reading Council was formed in order to mobilize and coordinate the skills and resources of the communication media, business, labor, and the general public. Planning efforts were undertaken at both the state and the Federal levels. Using the Convergence Technique originally developed for biomedical research and development problems, an organization chart for the 10-year National Right to Read Effort was developed. It provided for the following three major areas of activities: (1) Reading Progress Activities which are to lead to the development, dissemination, and adoption of effective instructional systems and goal achievement measurement; (2) Information and Coordination Activities which keep channels of communication open between the public, educators, local, state, and federal agencies, and national coordinators; and (3) Complementary Activities proposed for increasing the probability of achieving the goal and reducing the cost. A number of first-year activities have been carried out, and it would appear that the big steps are still ahead. References are included. (DH)

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THE RIGHT TO READ: A PROGRESS REPORT

by

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Presented at the National Reading Conference, St. Petersburg, Florida, December 4, 1970.

Last September in a speech before the National Association of State Boards of Education the United States Commissioner of Education challenged all of us when he announced "The Right to Read--Target for the Seventies." In that call to the Nation, Dr. Allen (1, p. 3) proclaimed that "We should immediately set for ourselves the goal of assuring that by the end of the 1970's the right to read shall be a reality for all--that no one shall be leaving our schools without the skill and the desire necessary to read to the full limits of his capability." In making this announcement, the Commissioner indicated that the first year would be a year of planning. This report is a summary of the activities of that year.

Recognizing that to achieve a goal of such magnitude would require involvement far beyond the forces of education, in December 1969 the Commissioner of Education appointed an Ad Hoc Task Force to develop a plan

providing for the involvement of both the public and the private sectors of our society in this national campaign to eliminate illiteracy. The Task Force report resulted in the announcement by President Nixon on July 31, 1970, of the formation of the National Reading Council. Composed of a cross-section of society, the Council will provide the partnership structure through which the skills and resources of the communications media, business, labor and the general public will be mobilized and will join with the educational community and the government at all levels in a concerted attack on this problem. The operating arm of the Council is the National Reading Center whose activities will include coordinating the efforts of contributing public and private organizations, organizing the training of citizen volunteers, developing public support and measuring the progress towards the goal.

A Right to Read Office was established in the Office of Education and is responsible for coordinating and mustering support for the Right to Read from existing educational programs and funds administered by the U. S. Office of Education.

This, then, is the National Right to Read Effort: a coordinated endeavor undertaken by all segments of society, public and private, professional and non-professional, to insure that in the next decade Americans shall not be denied a full and productive life because of an inability to read effectively. This Effort is <u>not</u> primarily a Federal effort, a single reading program nor a single reading method which is to be endorsed for the teaching of all. It does <u>not</u> remove authority or responsibility for overcoming reading handicaps from the State and local governments and the citizens of our communities where the responsibility for education properly rests in this

country. The Right to Read Effort is a campaign to persuade the public that there is a national reading problem, to determine what changes are required to accomplish the goal, to persuade those who need to change to do so, to identify existing resources, public and private, which can be brought to bear on the problem, and to make additional resources available.

Other major planning efforts were undertaken at both the State and the Federal level. At the request of the Commissioner of Education, many of the State Departments of Education have embarked upon their own planning activities and have developed or are developing plans for State action leading towards the attainment of the Right to Read goal in their State. And at the Federal level, an intensive planning session was held to determine what should be done to realize the Right to Read goal. Though the session did not result in a complete, detailed plan for the national effort, it did result in the development of a preliminary plan which describes and sequences the activities needed to attain the Right to Read goal. This plan I should like to discuss with you in some detail.

In 1967, Louis Carrese and Carl Baker of the National Institutes of Health developed a method for the planning and programming of research efforts. Called the Convergence Technique, it originally was formulated for application to biomedical research and development problems (2). Subsequently it was applied to reading research and development by William J. Gephart of Phi Delta Kappa in formulating a draft plan for the Targeted Research and Development Program on Reading (3). Using the Convergence Technique, a chart for the ten-year National Right to Read Effort was developed at the planning session which provides for three major areas of activities in addition to continuous planning activities. These areas are: Reading Progress

Activities, Information and Coordination Activities, and Complementary Activities. Activities in each of these three areas are divided into "streams"--coordinated operational procedures concentrating on specific aspects of the major activity. The relationship of these activity areas is presented diagrammatically on the National Right to Read Effort Activity Chart (Figure 1). The activities are shown in approximate time relationship with the overall program requiring ten years. The numbers on the chart do no represent sequences but are for ease of cross-reference.

Reading Progress Activities

The reading progress activities are those expected to lead most directly to attaining the goal: to the development, dissemination and adoption (by local agencies responsible for teaching reading) of effective reading instructional systems. Three streams of activity are involved:

Instructional Systems

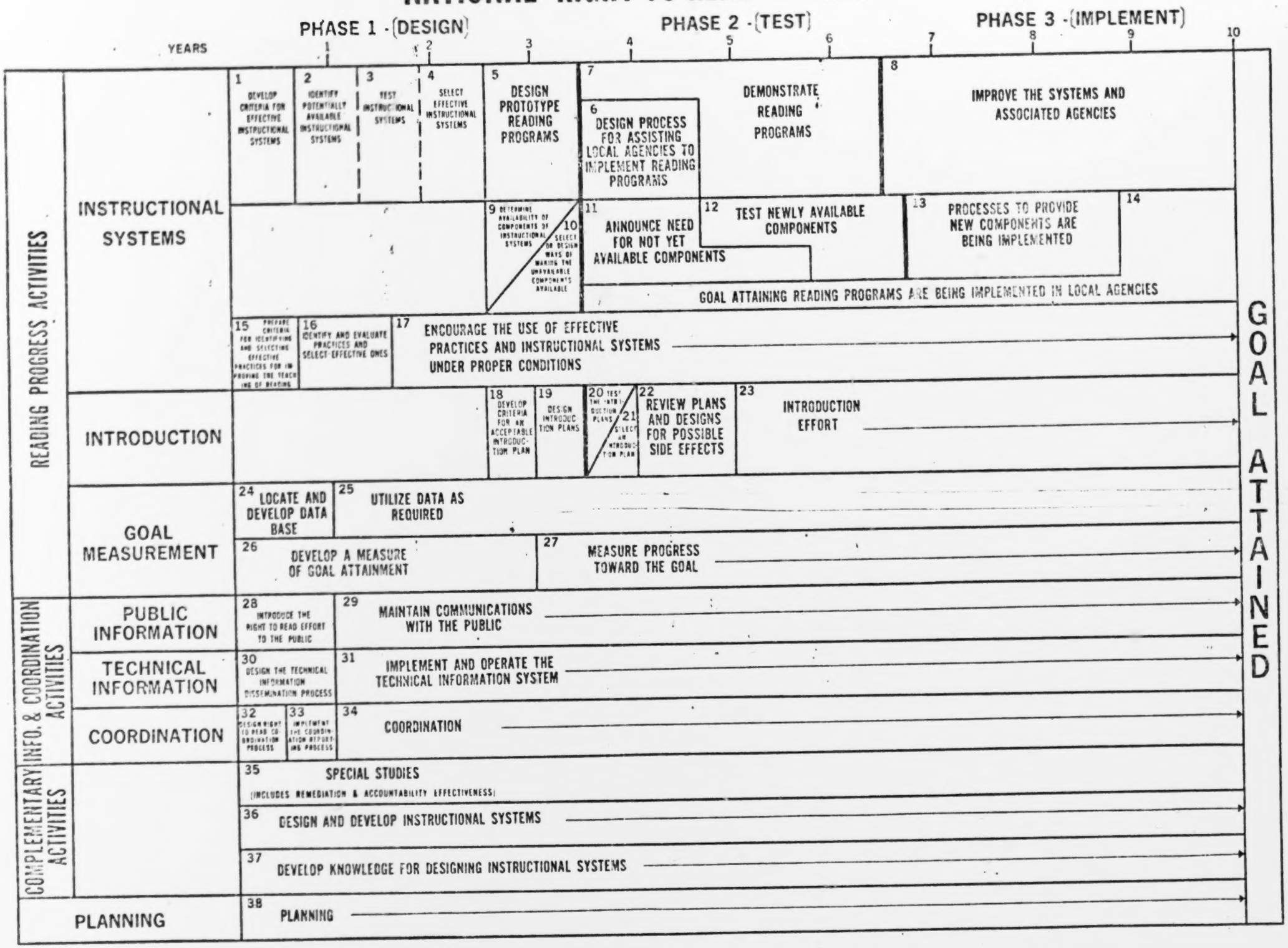
These are the activities which coordinate the design, test and pilot implementation of effective reading programs for local agencies. Most of these activities will take place at State and local levels, in private agencies and at universities. Reading programs include effective instructional systems and practices and the procedures for using them. Local agencies include public and private schools, libraries, industry, community centers and the family. Some of these activities encourage the development of the needed components and the training of instructors.

Introduction Effort

These are the activities which design, test and implement plans for publicizing and encouraging the use of effective systems and practices and for assisting in their adoption and operation by local agencies.

FIGURE 1

NATIONAL RIGHT-TO-READ EFFORT


PHASE 1 - (DESIGN)
PHASE 2 - (TEST)
PHASE 3 - (IMPLEMENT)
YEARS
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
READING PROGRESS ACTIVITIES
INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
1 DEVELOP CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
2 IDENTIFY POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
3 TEST INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
4 SELECT EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
5 DESIGN PROTOTYPE READING PROGRAMS
6 DESIGN PROCESS FOR ASSISTING LOCAL AGENCIES TO IMPLEMENT READING PROGRAMS
7 DEMONSTRATE READING PROGRAMS
8 IMPROVE THE SYSTEMS AND ASSOCIATED AGENCIES
9 DETERMINE AVAILABILITY OF COMPONENTS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
10 SELECT OR DESIGN WAYS OF MAKING THE UNAVAILABLE COMPONENTS AVAILABLE
11 ANNOUNCE NEED FOR NOT YET AVAILABLE COMPONENTS
12 TEST NEWLY AVAILABLE COMPONENTS
13 PROCESSES TO PROVIDE NEW COMPONENTS ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED
14 GOAL ATTAINING READING PROGRAMS ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED IN LOCAL AGENCIES
15 PREPARE CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING AND SELECTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF READING
16 IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE PRACTICES AND SELECT EFFECTIVE ONES
17 ENCOURAGE THE USE OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS UNDER PROPER CONDITIONS
INTRODUCTION
18 DEVELOP CRITERIA FOR AN ACCEPTABLE INTRODUCTION PLAN
19 DESIGN INTRODUCTION PLANS
20 TEST THE INTRODUCTION PLANS
21 SELECT AN INTRODUCTION PLAN
22 REVIEW PLANS AND DESIGNS FOR POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS
23 INTRODUCTION EFFORT
GOAL MEASUREMENT
24 LOCATE AND DEVELOP DATA BASE
25 UTILIZE DATA AS REQUIRED
26 DEVELOP A MEASURE OF GOAL ATTAINMENT
27 MEASURE PROGRESS TOWARD THE GOAL
INFO. & COORDINATION ACTIVITIES
PUBLIC INFORMATION
28 INTRODUCE THE RIGHT TO READ EFFORT TO THE PUBLIC
29 MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC
TECHNICAL INFORMATION
30 DESIGN THE TECHNICAL INFORMATION DISSEMINATION PROCESS
31 IMPLEMENT AND OPERATE THE TECHNICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
COORDINATION
32 DESIGN RIGHT TO READ COORDINATION PROCESS
33 IMPLEMENT THE COORDINATION REPORTING PROCESS
34 COORDINATION
COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES
35 SPECIAL STUDIES
(INCLUDES REMEDIATION & ACCOUNTABILITY EFFECTIVENESS)
36 DESIGN AND DEVELOP INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
37 DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE FOR DESIGNING INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
PLANNING
38 PLANNING
GOAL ATTAINED

Goal Measurement

To insure progress, activities are included to measure the extent to which the goal is being attained. This requires first a precise definition of a procedure for measuring the national level of reading skill and desire. The procedure must be a criterion-referenced instrument, based on real-world, reading-dependent behavioral requirements. The resulting procedure would then be administered periodically to measure how close the nation has come to attaining the Right to Read goal.

Information and Coordination Activities

The information and coordination activities support the Right to Read Effort by informing the public and educators of activities and progress, by developing channels by which citizens and institutions can communicate their opinions and ideas to local, State and Federal agencies, and by facilitating the coordination and direction of those participating in the Effort. In each of these activities, provision must be made for participants to communicate with one another as well as with the national coordinators. Like the Reading Progress area, this area has three streams of activities:

Public Information

These activities inform the public of the reading problem and progress toward the goal. Some of these activities include the establishment of channels by which the public can communicate with the coordinators of the Effort, with educational institutions and with others involved in teaching reading. As solutions become available, parents will be encouraged to observe their children's reading progress and, if it is not adequate, to take appropriate action. Regular media, volunteers, existing educational communication channels

and special communications networks will all be used in this communication process.

Technical Information

These activities result in the dissemination of technical information and data about effective instructional systems and practices for teaching reading. The dissemination required will utilize both existing systems (e.g. ERIC) and such new systems as may be devised.

Coordination

These are the activities which build an information system to insure that the National Right to Read Effort is coordinated. This system will permit those participating in the Effort to report progress, difficulties, findings and resource utilization to the coordinators and to other participants. It will provide channels by which the national coordinators can communicate sub-goals, activity plans, resource allocations and progress information to all participants.

Complementary Activities

Given our incomplete knowledge of reading phenomena, there is a possibility that the Reading Progress Activities will not completely meet the Right to Read goal. Complementary activities are proposed to help increase the probability of meeting the goal and to reduce the cost. The National Right to Read Effort will support the Targeted Research and Development Program on Reading which will lead to a deeper understanding of reading and of the way in which children learn to read. This in turn will facilitate the design and development of reading instructional systems which do meet the goal, which are more efficient and, therefore, use less of the nation's resources.

Other special studies and instructional system development efforts will be encouraged. These will help pinpoint ways of improving the cost-effectiveness of the Right to Read Effort and of the teaching of reading.

Planning

In order to insure that the National Right to Read Effort is coordinated, is effective and leads to goal attainment, it is necessary to review the plans at least yearly--for planning for any program is a continuous process.

Phasing

As indicated earlier, the overall Effort requires ten years. In the Reading Progress area, three progressive phases leading to goal attainment are perceived. These phases are separated by double vertical lines on the chart (Figure 1).

Phase 1 - Objective and Criteria

The objective of Phase 1 is to produce all of the technical information required to attain the goal. The criteria for the completion of this phase are the following:

1. A complete set of instructional systems have been specified, such that they can be put together into reading programs which will satisfy the needs of the many diverse local agencies.
2. The procedures for designing a reading program (consisting of the selected instructional systems and effective practices) have been specified.
3. At least one plan is available for introducing and implementing effective reading programs.

4. The components of the instructional system which are not yet available have been identied and the need for them estimated.
5. A procedure has been proposed and tested which will measure progress toward the goal.
6. All of the data needed to continue the Reading Progress activities are available or can be obtained when needed.

By this time, other activities should have insured that all of the communication procedures have been established for allowing free communication about technical and non-technical matters relative to the Right to Read Effort between all segments involved.

Phase 2 - Objective and Criteria

The objective of Phase 2 is to test the designs produced in Phase 1 to insure that they work and have no untoward side effects. The criteria for completion of Phase 2 are:

1. The approach to the design of reading programs and the use of effective instructional systems has been successfully demonstrated.
2. Complete information is available which will describe how a local agency can design, implement and operate its reading program to attain the goal. This information should be based on actual tests and demonstrations.
3. Complete information is available to field personnel which instructs them in how to assist local agencies in implementing a reading program and in obtaining the revenues and other resources required for it.

4. Measurements of progress toward the goal indicate that there is still a problem.

Other activities should insure that there is continuing public and institutional support for the National Right to Read Effort.

Phase 3 - Objective and Criterion

The objective of Phase 3 is the adoption and implementation of a goal-attaining reading program by every local agency not already meeting the goal or not attaining intermediate behavioral objectives. The criterion for completion of Phase 3 is the attainment of the National Right to Read Effort goal as indicated by the measurement procedure to be developed early in the Effort.

Though the preliminary plan was originally developed as a basic document to be presented to the National Reading Council for review and revision prior to implementation, the delay in the appointment of the Council made it necessary for Fiscal Year 1971 activities to get under way before the first meeting of the Council. Consequently, this preliminary plan has served as the planning document for the Office of Education's Right to Read activities in the present Fiscal Year including the expenditure or commitment of more than $10 million of discretionary funds. (It is anticipated that a master plan for the total National Right to Read Effort, incorporating elements of the preliminary plan as well as such revisions and additions as may be offered by the National Reading Council, will be submitted by the Commissioner of Education to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare for approval within the next few months.)

Before describing some of the first year activities, let us consider briefly the Targeted Research and Development Program on Reading and its relationship to the National Right to Read Effort. Both endeavors call for a goal-measurement instrument which provides for successful performance of those reading tasks deemed to be an integral part of adult life. Initiated more than a year prior to the announcement of the Right to Read, the Targeted Research and Development Program is concerned with attaining the goal through theoretical understanding of the reading process, language development and the learning to read process. It emphasizes the orderly progression from scientific success through development and test to implementation. The Targeted Research and Development Program, recognizing the difficulties of behavioral science, does not set a time goal.

The National Right to Read Effort, on the other hand, uses available and accumulating knowledge to reach the goal by 1980. The intent of the National Right to Read Effort is that every local agency responsible for teaching reading will have built over the next nine years its own reading program--one which will have the highest probability of producing goal-level reading skills and desire in <u>its</u> students. To assist a local agency in building a program for its varied populations, the National Right to Read Effort will help the local agency implement instructional systems and practices which have been demonstrated to have been effective in teaching specific reading behaviors.

Let us turn now to the first year activities on the National Right to Read chart (Figure 1). The development of criteria for defining effective instructional systems and practices (activities #1 and #15 respectively) is under way under the aegis of the Office of Education's National Center for

Education Research and Development. Basic to the success of a long-term effort such as the Right to Read is the development of a solid data base (activity #24). The Targeted Research and Development Program has assumed the major responsibility for this activity and is supporting research and development projects to (1) collect and analyze existing data which will profile reading achievement by different population groupings; (2) determine and evaluate the state of scientific knowledge about reading and learning to read; and (3) survey and catalog available components (texts, equipment, teaching skills) involved in engineering a reading instructional system. And finally, the Targeted Research and Development Program has initiated work on the definition and development of standards for adult reading competence through pinpointing the basic printed materials with which people presently must work--this represents the first step in the development of a broad-based measure of progress toward attainment of the Right to Read goal (activity #26).

Though public information will normally be the function of the National Reading Council, the following activities have been funded under Office of Education contracts to introduce the Right to Read Effort to the public (activity #28): (1) the development and distribution of five 60-second and five 30-second television and radio spot commercials on the Right to Read; (2) the production of one half-hour, color/sound motion picture on reading deficiency in America; (3) in the Spring of 1971, a traveling seminar will visit each of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's ten regions and will explore with citizens (largely from outside the educational community) various aspects of the reading problem and possible solutions

on the local level; and (4) the establishment of a Speakers' Bureau in support of the National Right to Read Effort.

The Office of Education's National Center for Educational Communication is deeply involved both in the actual dissemination of technical information and in the development of a communications and dissemination process (activity #30) which will accelerate the spread and installation of validated practices and research-based products.

The staff of the National Reading Center and the Right to Read Office in the U.S. Office of Education are currently working on the development of a coordination system for the National Effort (activity #32). A priority of the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education is the study and evaluation of performance contracting (activity #35). And finally, the Targeted Research and Development Program on Reading and the on-going reading projects in the Regional Laboratories and the Research and Development Centers are examples of activities included within blocks #36 and #37. A sampling of these programs include: (1) the Wisconsin Research and Development Center's elementary school program to expedite individually guided instruction in reading skill development; (2) the Pittsburgh Research and Development Center's individually prescribed early reading program and the installation of this program by Research for Better Schools (the Philadelphia-based Regional Laboratory); and (3) the Southwest Regional Laboratory's work in the development of a pre-school and elementary reading and language development instructional system.

Many, many other activities in support of the National Right to Read Effort have been undertaken in the year since the Right to Read was proclaimed

as education's moonshot for this decade, but time does not permit any further detailing of these activities. I hope this report has indicated that some small steps toward our goal have been taken. Let us not be unmindful, however, that soon we will be at the point of one down and nine to go for the 1980 target date---and the big steps are ahead. The members of the National Reading Conference have much to contribute to the accomplishment of these steps. I trust that the National Right to Read Effort will continue to have your active support.

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